and glaciology. The major areas of research in the Arctic pertain to climate change and paleoclimate; glaciology and geology; marine biology and microbiology.

Such matters are governed by an International Treaty - the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which does not allow claims beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and all signatory nations including India are bound by this Convention.

Requirement of power plant equipments

*288. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the BHEL is unable to cater to the requirement of equipments critical for the projected expansion of power sector;

(b) if so, how Government propose to overcome the constraints;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Ministry proposes to set up a separate company for the manufacture and supply of such equipments;

(d) whether Government have assessed that the expansion of the BHEL would be a cost-effective measure, as compared to the setting up of a new company; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) and (b) Delay in supply of critical equipment has been one of the reasons for slippages in executing the power projects in the recent past. The working of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), which is the major manufacturer of plant and equipment in the public sector, is being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises; furthermore, BHEL is augmenting its capacity to 10,000 MW by December, 2007 and further to 15,000 MW by December, 2009.

This Ministry is also supportive of the development and diversification of power generation equipment in the country with the objective of increasing competition, manufacturing capacity, improvement in supply schedules and quality; In addition, International Competitive Bidding (ICB) route is available to the PSUs for supply, erection and commissioning of power projects' equipment.

(c) to (e) This Ministry is of the view that there is need for substantial step up of world-class competitive manufacturing capability in the country considering the unprecedented capacity addition programme in the next 20-25 years. Therefore, more players need to be encouraged in the field of power equipment manufacturing to augment capacity as well as to generate competition.

NTPC, a Navaratna company under this Ministry, has decided to take 44.6% stake of Government of Kerala in Transformers and Electricals Kerala, Ltd. (TELK). An agreement to this effect has been signed amongst NTPC, TELK and Government of Kerala on 23.06.2007. TELK is a State-owned Company in the business of manufacturing of Transformers.

Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has assessed the manufacturing capacity of BHEL for new thermal capacity and to overcome the constraints, highlighting BHEL's present manufacturing capacity *vis-a-vis* the capacity planned to be added during the Eleventh Plan.

Expansion of BHEL as well as development of manufacturing capacity by generating CPSUs or private players alone or through joint ventures are possible options to augment the manufacturing capacity in line with the generation capacities being planned for the Eleventh Plan and beyond.

Vetting of production sharing contract

*289. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production sharing contract being signed by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the exploration blocks under NELP has been vetted by his Ministry;

(b.) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some provisions have been made in the contract to meet the contingencies arising out of the withdrawal of private contractor from the project without completion of work under NELP; and

(d) if so, the details-thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R BHARDWAJ): (a) to (d) A Yes, Sir. As per information furnished by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the Production Sharing Contracts signed between the Government of India and the awardee company/consortia under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) have been vetted by the Ministry of Law and Justice.

Under NELP, bids are invited through International competitive bidding process for allotment of exploration blocks where contractor has to bid minimum work programme, share of profit petroleum to the government and cost recovery limit. The Production Sharing Contracts contain the provision for submitting financial and performance bank guarantee by the company/consortia in favour of the government which can be revoked in the event of non performance/non compliance of relevant provisions of the contract.

Teacher absenteism in primary schools

†*290. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to a report by UNESCO, normally 25 per cent of the teachers remain absent in prfmary schools of the country;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.